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ABSTRACT

This essay concludes the American Council on Education (ACE) Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation, in which participating higher education institutions explored ways to succeed in an atmosphere of continuous change. This paper presents the highlights of the Project's experience in working with 23 institutions over 5 year. It begins with a brief description of the conceptualizations of change and transformation. The paper then describes the extent to which project participants achieved transformational or other kinds of change and the evidence of such transformation. The paper explores why some institutions made significant progress on their change agendas and how differences among institutions influenced the change process. Also offered are insights about leading change. Four factors were identified that shaped the successful course of change: (1) transforming institutions had propitious external environments and internal conditions; (2) change leaders displayed attitudes and came up with approaches that facilitated change; (3) leaders helped people develop new ways of thinking; and (4) leaders paid attention to the change process and adjusted their actions in response to what they learned by listening to the stakeholders in these institutions. One appendix lists the participants in the ACE Project and the other lists those participating in the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education Transformation. (SLD)

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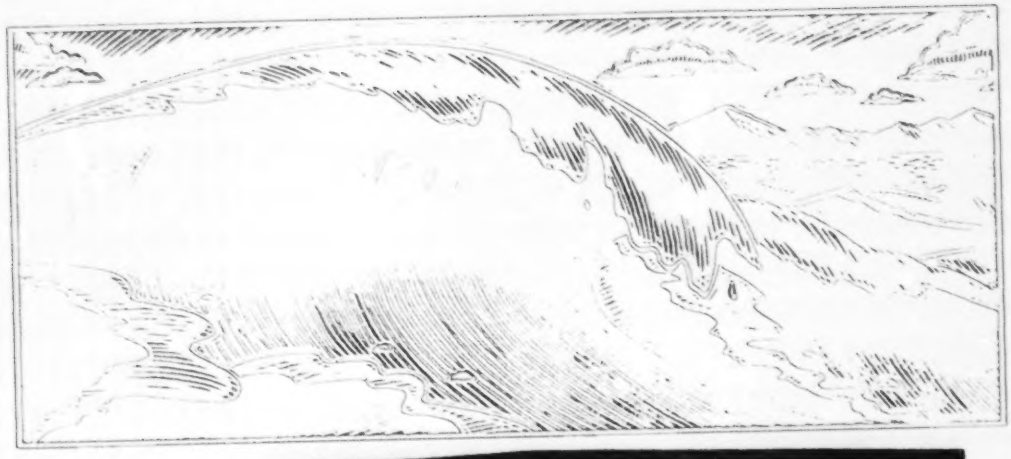

Riding the Waves of Change: Insights from Transforming Institutions

An Occasional Paper Series of the ACE Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation and The Kellogg Forum on Higher Education Transformation

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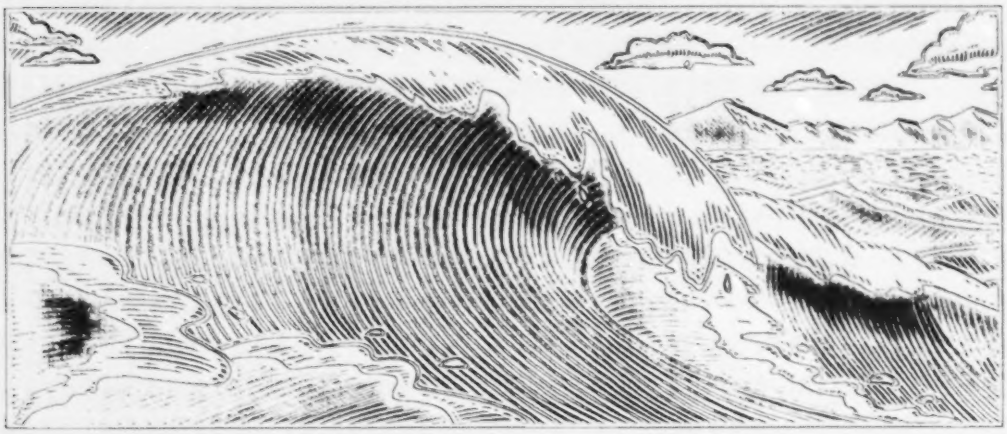

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Peter Eckel
Madeleine Green
Barbara Hill

An Occasional Paper Series of the ACE Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation and The Kellogg Forum on Higher Education Transformation

American Council on Education

ACE would like to thank the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for its steadfast support of these projects and for its commitment to strengthening higher education. ACE would also like to recognize the 23 institutions that participated in the ACE Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation and our colleagues from the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education Transformation. Their efforts and participation provide the foundation for this publication.

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American Council on Education
Center for Institutional and International Initiatives
One Dupont Circle NW
Washington, DC 20036
Fax: (202) 785-8056
E-mail: Change_Projects@ace.nche.edu

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Foreword

More than five years ago, with the support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the American Council on Education (ACE) launched its Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation with 26 diverse institutions that sought to accomplish different kinds of change; 23 institutions continued into the second phase of the project. In 1998, we broadened our investigation through the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education Transformation, a partnership of researchers and campus leaders who together sought to deepen their understanding of the change process and share that learning with others in higher education.

Three major questions framed our work from the outset: First, do colleges and universities have the capacity to chart their own futures, or will meaningful change happen only if imposed by outside forces?

Our second question concerned the nature of the institutional journeys that lay ahead. What makes some colleges and universities more successful than others in undertaking change? Is change simply difficult for all organizations, or are colleges and universities especially resistant because of their traditions and culture? How do such factors as institutional size or institutional culture influence the change process? What lessons can be drawn from the experiences of participating institutions that could be instructive to others? What allows some institutions the ability to ride the waves of change skillfully, while others can only duck and let the waves crash over them, hoping for the best?

Finally, we wanted to understand what is necessary to be a successful change leader. The literature on leadership and the lessons of experience indicate that there is no prototype of the successful leader. But with that said, could we observe any common strategies, outlooks, or habits of mind that facilitated change across institutional settings?

This essay concludes the ACE Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation, although it is not the final word on any of these complex questions. It simply reflects the insights and experiences of a group of institutions participating in the project. It is additionally informed by a sister initiative, the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education Transformation. The ideas presented here cannot claim to be a comprehensive analysis of change in higher education; rather, they capture the experiences of a self-selected set of institutions. We have chosen to present a limited number of observations and questions in this essay, and we have no doubt that our readers will have many insights to add.

In the following pages, we try to explore some vexing and persistent questions about change in higher education and to present some partial answers based on our experience with the institutions in the two projects. We hope that this issue of *On Change* provides an opportunity for campus change leaders and policy makers to think anew about what kind of future they can create for higher education and how they will go about it.

Madeleine Green
Vice President and Project Director
American Council on Education

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Additional thanks to our partners in the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education. We appreciate the insights and contributions of leaders and scholars from Alverno College (WI), the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan, the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California Los Angeles, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Minnesota State College and University System, the New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston, Olivet College (MI), Portland State University (OR), and the University of Arizona.

We thank Adrianna Kezar for helping us refine our observations about institutional culture, and Arthur Chickering, Judith Ramaley, and Gloria Thomas, who commented on this document.

We humbly take responsibility for any errors, infelicities, and misinterpretations that may have occurred, in spite of our good intentions to be clear, coherent, and correct.

Introduction

For the past 20 years, American bookstores have overflowed with publications on management and leadership. Scholars, practitioners, and dispensers of popular wisdom have filled the shelves with an uneven but copious supply of insights on how to manage and lead effective organizations. More recently, writers have turned their attention to the phenomenon of change, producing once again scores of analyses, stories of success and failure, and parables intended to guide the modern organization. The American romance with leadership has been overtaken by a passion for change management.

The higher education enterprise also has been preoccupied with change. Not surprisingly, the terms of the debate have been different from that in the corporate sector. On the one hand, no one denies that the themes of globalization, technology, competition, diversity, and concerns about quality are transforming the environment for colleges and universities. The language describing the new environment and the pressures for change are well known to our readers–so well known, in fact, that we dispense with the familiar introductory paragraphs describing this environment. But the general agreement that the world is rapidly changing and the rules of the game are different from those of only a decade ago yields no consensus on the implications of those realities for higher education. Some observers insist that traditional colleges and universities must completely transform themselves–becoming more efficient, more affordable, more responsive to students–or risk becoming obsolete, overpowered by competitors who can deliver such an education. Other voices emphasize the urgency of higher education's reclaiming the moral high ground and of more actively contributing to the social good. Still others scoff at the notion that the sky is falling, proclaiming the resiliency of colleges and universities and citing their adaptation and endurance over time.

Another aspect of the debate turns on whether higher education institutions have the capacity to translate their understanding of the new environment into a strategy for the future. Some observers are convinced that institutions react to uncertainty with resistance, only changing when forced to do so by legislators, activist boards, or public pressure. If colleges and universities want to take charge of their futures, they must develop the capacities to change and change again in ways consistent with their mission and purpose. What does it take for institutions to stand up and ride the waves of change rather than waiting in the surf, digging in their heels, and hoping to remain upright as each successive wave crashes over their heads?

To assist higher education institutions as they grappled with change, the American Council on Education (ACE) launched the Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation in 1995 with 26 public and private institutions, including community colleges, liberal arts colleges, comprehensive and doctoral universities, and research universities. Three institutions elected not to continue into the project's final two-year phase. (Appendix A lists the 26 participating institutions and their change agendas.) The goals of the project were to learn from the experiences of the institutions as they embarked on their journeys of change and to help them achieve their goals. Specifically, we sought to help

What does it take for institutions to stand up and ride the waves of change rather than waiting in the surf, digging in their heels, and hoping to remain upright as each successive wave crashes over their heads?

The path of change was never linear; unexpected events and unintended consequences of predictable occurrences shaped the course of change in every institution. The process took twists and turns, sped up and slowed down, and the substance of the change agendas took on new dimensions over time.

campus change leaders (faculty and administrators with the responsibility of leading the institution-wide change efforts) articulate and accomplish their goals and to help their institutions undergo continuous change through reflection and learning. We also sought to learn from their experiences and to disseminate this learning to administrative and faculty leaders and policy makers.

The participating institutions joined the project with a range of change agendas. For example, some were shifting to a student- or learning-centered culture from a faculty-centered one, or infusing technology across the institution to improve teaching and learning, while others were rethinking faculty roles and responsibilities, implementing new ways of making decisions, and recrafting the curriculum and its purposes. During the project, the institutions' agendas evolved–some became more complex and challenging, as one change led to another, and others grew more limited in scope and less profound in their potential effects. The path of change was never linear; unexpected events and unintended consequences of predictable occurrences shaped the course of change in every institution. The process took twists and turns, sped up and slowed down, and the substance of the change agendas took on new dimensions over time.

We further refined our insights through the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education Transformation (KFHET), a three-year partnership to explore and understand institutional change and transformation through interactions between higher education scholars and institutional leaders. The Forum involved ACE, Alverno College (WI), the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan, the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California Los Angeles, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Minnesota State College and University System, the New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston, Olivet College (MI), Portland State University (OR), and the University of Arizona.

This paper, the fifth in the *On Change* occasional paper series, presents the highlights of our experience from working with 23 institutions for those five years and our participation in the KFHET. We begin with a brief description of our conceptualizations of change and transformation. Second, we describe the extent to which project participants achieved transformational or other kinds of change and the evidence of such transformation. Third, we explore why some institutions made significant progress on their change agendas and how differences among institutions influenced the change process. We also offer insights about leading change that build on our earlier observations, presented in *On Change II: Reports from the Road.*[1]

[1] *On Change II: Reports from the Road* is available free of charge in PDF format from the ACE bookstore web site at http://www.acenet.edu/.

A Continuum of Change in Higher Education

Defining Transformation

Throughout our project, the use of language was always an important issue; we discovered that the terms "change" and "transformation" provoked different reactions. In some cases, both terms elicited negative responses, causing many institutional leaders to avoid them altogether out of concern that the terms would create fear and resistance. In these cases, the more neutral concepts of improvement and quality enhancement proved useful. While some people were excited and energized by the idea of change, others found it threatening, believing it suggested both a complete break with the past and an uncertain future. Change, they believed, further seemed to devalue an institution's and individual's accomplishments and commitments.

Another difficulty lay in people ascribing different meanings to particular words. In some lexicons, "transformation" was associated with important institution-wide changes; in others, it was tied to speed and meant rapid change; and in still others, it denoted any kind of negative or threatening change. Thus, developing a set of common definitions within the project was an important basis for clear communication, common understandings, and interinstitutional learning. To distinguish transformation from other types of change, we developed the following definition: Transformation (1) alters the culture of the institution by changing underlying assumptions and overt institutional behaviors, processes, and structures; (2) is deep and pervasive, affecting the whole institution; (3) is intentional; and (4) occurs over time. This definition of transformation distinguishes it both qualitatively and quantitatively from other kinds of change that occur in colleges and universities.

We found it helpful to understand the concepts of depth and pervasiveness, and their interactions, in articulating the types of change institutions sought. Depth focuses on how profoundly a change affects behavior or alters structures; the deeper a change, the more it is infused into the attitudes and daily lives of those affected by it. Consider the example of an academic department that decides community service is of central importance to its mission. Through the change process, promotion and tenure decisions become heavily based on faculty service records, students engage in service as a consistent part of their required coursework, and the university annually recognizes faculty members for service contributions beyond the campus. Another example is a redesigned course now incorporating technology to promote active learning. The change may result in an entirely different kind of learning experience for the student, one in which the professor takes on the new role of guide and mentor and the student trades the passive role of note-taker for one of team member, collaborating on a project with classmates.

Deep change implies a shift in values and assumptions that underlie the usual way of doing business. Deep change requires people to think differently as well as to act differently. In the first example in the previous paragraph, the importance of connecting to the community provides a value structure that drives changes in the curriculum and in faculty roles and

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The depth of transformation addresses those assumptions that tell organizations what to do, how to behave, and what to produce. In other words, transformation touches the core of the institution.

rewards. A deep change is not necessarily broad. Given the decentralized nature of academic institutions, it is possible for deep changes to occur within specific units or academic departments without being widespread throughout the institution.

Pervasiveness refers to the extent to which a change is far-reaching within the institution. The more pervasive a change, the more it crosses unit boundaries and touches different parts of the institution. The use of computers is a familiar example of pervasive change. Computers sit on most faculty members' desks; students have access to computer labs, and many have their own computers. Furthermore, faculty and staff use computers for everything from tracking student accounts and inventory in the bookstore to submitting grades and analyzing data for research.

These two basic elements of change–depth and pervasiveness–can be combined in different ways to produce the categories of change expressed in the following matrix, which outlines four types of institutional change: adjustment, isolated change, pervasive change, and transformational change.

Typology of Change

		Depth: Low	Depth: High
Pervasiveness	Low	Adjustment (I)	Isolated Change (II)
	High	Pervasive Change (III)	Transformational Change (IV)

Using the parameters of depth and pervasiveness of change, we found essentially four kinds of change occurring on campuses. The first quadrant is adjustment–a change or a series of changes that are modifications to an existing practice. Changes of this nature are revisions, revitalizations, or renewals; they occur when current designs or procedures are improved or extended. An adjustment may improve a process or the quality of a service, or it might add a new element. Nevertheless, an adjustment is not a drastic alteration and does not yield deep or far-reaching effects. The second quadrant, isolated change, is deep but limited to one unit or a particular area; it is not pervasive. An example is the infusion of an international dimension into the curriculum of a business school or an economics department. The third quadrant is pervasive change; it is extensive but does not affect the organization very deeply. An example of this type of change is a new process of submitting grades via the web. It affects all academic units; however, the change is not very deep.

The final quadrant is transformational change. Transformation occurs when a change is both deep and pervasive. Transformation does not entail fixing discrete problems or adjusting and refining current activities. The depth of transformation addresses those assumptions that tell organizations what to do, how to behave, and what to produce. In other words, transformation touches the core of the institution. Transformational change also is pervasive; it is a collective, institution-wide movement, even though it can happen one unit (or even one person) at a time. When enough people act differently or think in a new way, that new way becomes the norm. The institution becomes transformed because it has adopted a new institutional culture.

Consider the example of the institution that was working on infusing social responsibility throughout its culture. It made significant changes to its curriculum so that the content of many courses included civic issues. It altered pedagogies and assessment activities to include service learning, learning communities, community-based learning, and portfolios that stressed civic engagement. It instituted required, service-based capstone courses. The institution created new offices to foster community-university relationships and assist

faculty in developing their community-based learning experiences. The institution changed its hiring policies and merit-pay structure to more heavily weigh faculty commitment to social responsibility. It changed the way it recruited students, working with community organizations, churches, and boys' and girls' clubs. The institution developed budgetary incentives to encourage units to engage more closely with the community and created an internal grants competition to fund scholarship efforts that addressed immediate community problems. It created a speaker series in which local, national, and international leaders were invited to campus to discuss the social purposes of education.

Another way of visualizing this four-part typology of change is to think of a continuum going from the least amount of change to the greatest amount of change.

We observed a full range of accomplishments in the project, with some institutions transforming, some merely adjusting, and others somewhere in the middle. Some of the project institutions changed significantly and sustained their changes, and others tried to change but had difficulty embedding changes in the culture. Like most colleges and universities, the institutions in the ACE project and those involved in KFHET sought to retain the basic functions of teaching, research, and service. But most of the institutions aimed to alter the ways in which they performed them and to rethink the operating principles behind them.

As the project progressed, the efforts of those institutions making the most progress could best be described as "transforming," where intentional change is ongoing and not merely a task to be accomplished. "Transforming" denotes a work in progress; "transformed" suggests a journey completed. Because change has cascading effects, success and progress on a comprehensive change agenda created challenges that demanded more changes. Thus, the institutions that achieved the most extensive and deep change were "transforming," not "transformed." Consider the example of the primarily undergraduate institution whose initial change agenda was to develop a set of graduate programs. It soon became apparent that a significant shift in the proportion of graduate and undergraduate students created new issues needing attention. Among them were defining the workload for those faculty who were teaching graduate students, coming up with ways to offer courses for both undergraduate and graduate students, rethinking space utilization to accommodate graduate students' study and social needs, and deciding who was eligible to hold leadership positions on the student newspaper. Only when the college had firmly established its graduate programs did these and other ancillary questions arise.

Absent from our definition of transformation is the concept of time. Because transformation is deep, pervasive, and alters culture, we surmised that institutions would be unlikely to show dramatic results quickly; the experience of the project institutions corroborated that expectation. Transformation in academic institutions is most likely to occur through evolutionary rather than revolutionary steps, and specific circumstances of internal and external factors influence the rate of change. Most colleges and universities do not have the cultures, the structures, or sufficient environmental pressures to bring about rapid transformation.

Continuum of Change

Little depth and pervasiveness		Great depth and pervasiveness
Adjustment	Isolated change or extensive but shallow change	Transformational change

We tend to think of evidence as clear, tangible, and explicit. Yet transforming institutions also exhibit more subtle, but equally important, signs of cultural change, which are important predictors of an institution's ability to engage in ongoing learning and change.

Evidence of Transformation

A difficult aspect of understanding the change process and making judgments about the extent of change accomplished by the participating institutions is identifying evidence of transformation. We tend to think of evidence as clear, tangible, and explicit. Yet transforming institutions also exhibit more subtle, but equally important, signs of cultural change, which are important predictors of an institution's ability to engage in ongoing learning and change. To accommodate both types of evidence, we identified both explicit and implicit indicators of change. The explicit indicators involved visible changes in structures, policies, and practices; the implicit indicators involved attitudinal and cultural evidence. No single indicator is a sufficient marker of transformation, but the accumulation and interaction of multiple kinds of evidence are significant. In transformation, compounded evidence signals change leading to transformation, especially if it touches matters of attitudes and culture.

Structures, Policies, and Practices

Explicit information can be counted, measured, and compared to baseline information, and multiple pieces of explicit evidence include for example, structures, policies, and practices, with connections and synergy among them. Such evidence most likely suggests deep and pervasive change. For example, one institution seeking to transform teaching and learning with technology could point to the large number of instructors using technology in their courses and also to changes in curriculum, changes in faculty hiring and promotion policies, budgets, and new standing senate committees. Another new structure emerged when campus leaders created a center to support teaching and technology innovations. The changes were aligned, mutually reinforcing, synergistic, and reflected progress in a common direction. The explicit indicators of transformation we observed included:

- *Changes to the curriculum.* While typical curricular change can be relatively minor (changing the number of science courses or adding a diversity/culture course), transformational change altered the content and organization of the curriculum, the central principles of what it intended to accomplish, and who was responsible for delivering specific curricular goals.
- *Changes in pedagogy.* Transforming institutions altered the traditional array of lectures, discussion sessions, and seminars by adopting alternative teaching methods such as collaborative work, web-based learning, service learning, and learning communities.
- *Changes in student learning outcomes.* Transforming institutions could articulate and demonstrate improvements in student learning, frequently through student portfolios. These institutions often used assessment strategies to guide their decisions and target some of their change efforts, adjusting course content, pedagogy, and curriculum structure according to what they learned.
- *Changes in policies.* Transforming institutions aligned their policies with their stated goals and articulated values. Key policies modified to support transformation initiatives affected information technology; merit pay and annual evaluations; hiring, promotion, and tenure; program review; and faculty development and travel.
- *Changes in budget priorities.* Transforming institutions moved beyond mere rhetoric of change by establishing and implementing new financial decisions consistent with their change agendas. Changes in budgets reflected the altered priorities so that good ideas did not wither for lack of resources. Sometimes, leaders found new sources of money; at other times they reallocated existing dollars.
- *New organizational structures.* Transforming institutions created new organizational units to do the new work of

the change agenda; these new units typically had separate budgets and particular functions, and they frequently became information clearinghouses and centers of coordination of campus-wide efforts. Examples included centers for teaching excellence, departments for technology planning and support, and units responsible for community service and outreach.

- *New decision-making structures.* Transforming institutions quickly learned that familiar methods of decision making led to expected (and habitual) conclusions. To develop new solutions, institutions created new decision-making patterns that led to creative ideas and courses of action. Sometimes ad hoc structures outside the governance system worked; at other times, incorporating task forces into formal governance processes provided the solution.

Attitudinal and Cultural Evidence

We observed that successful transformation invariably involves qualitative or underlying evidence–largely attitudinal and cultural shifts. Such evidence suggests that an institution has undergone more than surface change; it has transformed its beliefs and assumptions about its work and the ways to accomplish that work. This evidence of successful transformation goes beyond the markers of change commonly used by accrediting teams, legislatures, or boards of trustees. The underlying indicators of change that we observed were:

- *Changes in interactions.* Institutions en route to transformation found ways to generate new ideas and energy by connecting people from different units who previously did not work together. They also changed the patterns of interaction among those groups. For example, many institutions treated faculty members and student affairs professionals as educational peers, rather than considering the latter as simply responsible for "extracurricular" activities. By combining different stakeholders internal to the institution (and sometimes adding new external partners), conversations reflected new substance, directions, priorities, and attitudes. Transforming institutions also reinforced new interactions of faculty and students to increase learning, for example through joint student-faculty research, student participation in campus decision making, and faculty-led service learning experiences. These new relationships were consistent with other approaches to improving student learning.
- *Changes in the institution's self-image.* Transforming institutions developed new language to describe themselves in the context of their change initiatives. As they shared that terminology, this new piece of the institutional fabric became a marker of cultural transformation. For example, institutions that had once aspired to be research universities found renewed pride by creating niches or becoming premier teaching institutions. Their language and self-image became aligned in a positive, new direction.
- *Changes in rationales.* At transforming institutions, old justifications for inaction did not fit new realities; more people abandoned old arguments beginning with "we can't do this because. . ." or "we tried this and it failed. . ." An institution's willingness to take a fresh look at its situation demonstrated important shifts in institutional beliefs, behavior norms, and culture. Of course, new arguments for inaction did sometimes surface, but argumentation is an enduring feature of academic life.
- *New relationships between the institution and its stakeholders.* Undergoing transformational change involves external stakeholders such as trustees, alumni and donors, community groups, local businesses, and foundations. Transforming institu-

We observed that successful transformation invariably involves qualitative or underlying evidence—largely attitudinal and cultural shifts.

But to those participating faculty and administrators, change still was very much a work in progress, and they readily acknowledged that success simply led to new challenges—and even more changes.

tions created new types of relationships with these long-time stakeholders, involving them in institutional life in new ways and creating productive partnerships. These institutions also cultivated relationships with new and different stakeholders as well.

The Range of Changes that Institutions Accomplished

Regular campus visits, project meetings, reports from the institutions, and telephone and e-mail contact during a five-year period revealed significantly different accomplishments among the participating colleges and universities. Some had become, or were on their way to becoming, transforming institutions. These campuses demonstrated important changes, some evidence visible and tangible, some evidence more cultural. Other institutions made adjustments and improvements–changes that were less deep or less pervasive and that did not add up to major change by the end of the project.

Institutions Transforming

About one-quarter of the participating institutions experienced many visible successes and clearly were engaged in a continual change process. Compared to where they were five or 10 years earlier, these institutions might be considered "transformed," so deep and broad were the changes that had occurred. But to those participating faculty and administrators, change still was very much a work in progress, and they readily acknowledged that success simply led to new challenges–and even more changes.

Because most of these institutions had worked on their change agendas for more than five years (starting before the project began), their challenges were now second- and third-generation issues stimulated by earlier successes. One institution had made a major commitment to transforming teaching and learning, using technology as a major lever for change. The first generation of issues dealt with gathering faculty support for an increased emphasis on teaching excellence; a faculty-developed vision statement laid an essential foundation. As faculty and administrative leaders encouraged greater use of technology in the classroom, they found themselves reconsidering policies concerning faculty rewards. Each school and department set about reviewing and altering its promotion and tenure policies, which in turn required attention to the alignment of practice with policy. As faculty use of technology grew, issues of support and collaboration became important. In short, each success led to a new and related (and occasionally unanticipated) set of challenges.

Another institution sought to organize its entire undergraduate experience around the concept of social responsibility. During the first few years, the college focused on the curriculum and the co-curriculum, designing a core curriculum to ensure student learning about relevant social, historical, and political issues. Students took responsibility for their learning through creating a portfolio that integrated and documented their learning. The co-curriculum intentionally supported these learning goals through a campus-wide code of conduct based on mutual respect and caring, developed with widespread input and discussion. These changes were profound for students and faculty, requiring a rethinking of nearly every aspect of the college experience. But once the institution had successfully tackled these challenges, a new set arose, driven by campus-wide recognition that it had not fully incorporated its staff into the new campus ethos: What was their role in this community? Were staff "educators" and not simply managers and administrators? The college implemented an energetic new series of efforts that focused on the staff, intentionally conceiving their roles as full members of the

learning community and integrating them fully into the teaching and learning process.

Although transforming institutions often experienced setbacks along the way, such as challenges by faculty, funding downturns, and leadership transitions, they continued to work on the change agenda, however uneven their progress seemed at times. These institutions continued to face their share of people indifferent to the change, with some working actively against it. But the changes became deeply embedded over time, despite the efforts of those who wanted to derail the change efforts.

Institutions Adjusting

About one-quarter of the participating institutions were "adjusting," having made a variety of improvements but no major changes. Some of these institutions entered the project with circumscribed visions of change. While others aimed for transformational change, they instead mired themselves in adjustment and improvement. These institutions that "made adjustments" did accomplish some change. One institution launched a new program and added a requirement to the general education curriculum; another institution piloted new mechanisms for faculty and administrative decision making. However, these efforts were limited in their impact, affecting only a small group of students or faculty, and were not linked to other agendas or efforts with change on campus. More significantly, they did not lead to changes in institutional culture.

Institutions in the Middle Ground

About half of the participating institutions made some change that was either pervasive or deep, generally accomplishing more "isolated" than "extensive" change. They achieved more change than the group making adjustments, generally achieving important advancements in some areas or departments that had not yet spread across the institution. For example, one institution made tremendous progress engaging faculty in some departments to focus on improving learning and to take a critical look at new methods of teaching; one could describe these departments as "transforming." However, faculty in other departments did not engage in the same level of critical analysis and activity, and the library and computer infrastructure did not keep pace with student or faculty demands created by the new pedagogy. In another five years, however, this institution might look very different, with more departments "transforming" than not.

Time was clearly a factor for some institutions; while campus leaders may have established important foundations for meaningful change, the faculty may have needed more involvement in succeeding years to produce additional results. For example, one institution creating a new undergraduate experience held a series of campus conversations and cross-departmental working groups to develop widespread agreement about educational objectives and to align the curriculum with those objectives. The governing board supported the initiative, and the university senate approved a framework to guide future steps, although the institution had not yet taken the final steps to implement its proposed changes. This institution was clearly in the middle ground. Another institution had planned the necessary policy changes and resource reallocations to support an investment in technology, but they had not implemented the changes; rather, they only ensured that such changes, once in place, would be operational.

Continued progress toward transformation for most of these institutions in the middle ground is not guaranteed. Progress to date could be undone by any number of factors, such as a powerful coordinated resistance before the institution firmly establishes the change, a leadership transition, or a diversion of attention and resources.

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Why Are Some Institutions More Successful at Accomplishing Change Than Others?

The distinction between the transforming institutions and those that accomplished less change raised the following questions: What makes some colleges and universities more "transforming" than others? We identified four factors that shaped the successful course of change:

- *Transforming institutions had propitious external environments and internal conditions.* While there was external pressure for change (for example, from legislators, governing boards, parents, and/or students), these institutions also had the freedom to respond creatively and to remain in control of their futures.
- *Change leaders displayed attitudes and came up with approaches that facilitated change.* They recognized the importance of anchoring change in cherished academic values, created a climate of trust, shared the credit, and looked at change from a long-term perspective.
- *Leaders helped people develop new ways of thinking.* They understood that change required new and different ideas as well as different practices, structures, and policies. They provided opportunities for people to reflect on the assumptions, values, and habits that supported the status quo.
- *Leaders paid attention to the change process and adjusted their actions in response to what they learned by listening to the stakeholders in these institutions.* They thought about who was involved and why, and what changes made sense to whom. Instead of discounting dissent, they listened to and learned from it.

Propitious External Environments and Internal Conditions

Events and circumstances beyond the control of campus leaders exert a powerful influence on the course of an institution's change agenda and its likelihood of success. Institutions that progressed the most on their change agendas existed in environments that provided necessary energy for change, without being overwhelming. In some cases, the environment provided a shock, requiring the institution to react. In other cases, the environment provided necessary, but less intense, pressure that had accumulated. While the environment plays an important role in the change process, it is not fate. Some institutions with promising environments nonetheless squandered their opportunities through lack of attention to process, or inability to bring issues to closure. Even some institutions with problematic environments learned that crisis is neither a death sentence nor a guarantee of failure. Careful attention to process helped even these embattled institutions achieve some change.

While the environment plays an important role in the change process, it is not fate.

Of the institutions that struggled with change, their environments provided no pressure for change, too much pressure, or pressure to move in a different, and not always desirable, direction.

In some cases, changes occurring outside the institution made particular operations obsolete, and thus required a response. For example, one public institution–which already was experiencing a long-term shift toward being a campus composed largely of adult students–suddenly faced a steep cut in state funding. The long-term shift and the sudden financial shock moved the campus to action. At another institution, the state legislature made significant funds available for technology enhancement, creating opportunities to rethink and improve teaching and learning. Both environments provided an external impetus for change; leaders could now link faculty and staff desires and goals with external demands to enhance the institution.

The environments of the institutions that struggled with change provided no pressure for change, too much pressure, or pressure to move in a different, and not always desirable, direction. Lack of environmental pressures required institutional leaders to generate significant internal energy to spur change or to create a situation demanding action. Because leaders in these situations had to draw solely on internally derived energy and motivations for change, their efforts moved slowly and could easily become politicized as no agreed-upon need for change existed. Leaders could not simply point to readily identifiable threats or opportunities.

Similarly, highly demanding and stressful environments frustrated some institutional change initiatives because crises kept interrupting any movement on a set of issues. In these institutions, the leaders spent so much time attending to new challenges that they often could not give the change agenda adequate attention. In some of these turbulent situations, faculty members felt defeated as their work on change was continually undercut by new impending crises; they were always swimming against a powerful current.

Finally, some institutions face environments that push them in directions they do not seek. These external pressures do not correspond to the direction of their change agendas. For example, one institution trying to ensure greater student success faced continuous political pressure about admissions policies and special programs for underprepared students. The policy makers' definition of academic excellence undermined the campus's agreed-upon values and objectives to improve learning and success for all students, regardless of their academic shortcomings upon entering.

In addition to favorable external environments, institutions needed to have internal conditions that supported their change efforts. Without a solid infrastructure, and a sense of goodwill and trust, institutions struggled. Mutual trust among faculty, administrators, and boards facilitated change. Another internal condition was a high level of agreement on the challenges facing the institution and on the best ways to proceed. When an institution's internal desires are consistent and recognized by various groups of faculty, administrators, trustees, and students, conditions for change are more likely to be favorable. When institutions became embroiled in internal disarray–for example, when faculty and administrators disagreed, or when boards of trustees had different agendas and values from those of the faculty and/or administration–these institutions rarely advanced their change agendas.

Attitudes and Habits of Change Leaders

The ways leaders approached problems, the attitudes they displayed, their dispositions, and their commitments powerfully influenced the change initiative. The following habits and attitudes were most important to the success of change leaders:

Being Principle-Driven

Successful leaders grounded their institutional change efforts in a set of guiding principles and

purposes and then created a process to generate, test, and refine these principles as a basis for action. Such frameworks reflected important institutional aspirations and values and provided intellectual cohesion for a range of activities. Connecting change initiatives to a larger sense of purpose helped demonstrate the linkages between campus efforts and larger purposes and signaled that particular efforts contributed to a larger whole. The frameworks became a touchstone for setting goals; determining priorities; aligning structures, policies, and beliefs with principles; and assessing progress.

At some institutions, change leaders articulated principles through various grassroots processes, such as faculty-administration-student working groups or campus-wide retreats. For example, one liberal arts college conducted a retreat with outside facilitators to craft a set of guiding principles that would form the foundations of change. Attendees included most of the faculty, students, administrators, professional and other staff, and many of the trustees. At other institutions, leaders proposed a set of principles and then created a process to refine these principles based on campus feedback. All of the institutions used processes with multiple steps and widespread involvement of faculty, staff, students, and administrators to clarify and finalize the principles and construct them in a meaningful framework. Sometimes board members played active roles in articulating principles; in other instances, boards reacted to the work of faculty and administrators. One institution conducted a series of 10 roundtables in which they invited faculty and staff to comment on draft statements of principles; approximately 85 percent of faculty participated in the process. The leaders, in turn, collected the roundtable summaries and produced another version of the guiding principles based on this input.

Often colleges and universities started by reaffirming well-known institutional values or turning to their historic missions. They sometimes adopted a motto to articulate their principles, such as "let knowledge serve the city," or "education for social responsibility." Other institutions used statements such as "computer competency," or "the student-centered research university" to convey key beliefs.

Taking the Long-Term Perspective

The transforming institutions found that making progress on their change agendas caused new challenges to surface and required successive changes. The continuous nature of change can demoralize those working hard to lead the efforts; new problems generated by the change can fuel resisters who think the institution never should have attempted the change in the first place. Change processes at transforming institutions tended to follow a broad pattern of intensive work to launch the efforts, followed by a period of momentum, progress, and feelings of accomplishment. Deeper issues then emerged, made evident by recent successes. Institutions found these new problems to be more complex, and solutions were not always quick or easy. These problems tended to present difficult choices among competing priorities and affected many people, including those who thought they could choose to avoid the effects of change.

Second- and third-generation change issues tended to emerge only when change leaders became tired from the initial work. Leaders found it difficult, if not impossible, to foresee such new challenges. Continuous change required renewing campus change leaders or enlisting new leaders with the necessary commitment and stamina to take on the next set of issues. In some instances, the transforming institutions found ways to free the existing change leaders from other responsibilities so they could focus their attention on the work at hand. They allocated time for faculty to work on the change agenda or created positions that included the change efforts as a responsibility. Other institutions assigned

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large teams to lead change efforts so that some members could step out of the change process while others carried the work forward.

All but one of the transforming institutions faced a significant leadership transition, either at the level of president or provost or by the faculty leading the efforts. Institutions that continued to make progress hired or appointed new leaders who believed in the transformation underway, would support the initiative, and possessed the skills and strengths to advance the institution's change agenda. Sometimes these new leaders brought talents and strengths that were different from those of former leaders, but these strengths did not prevent them from continuing to focus on the change agenda in progress.

Balancing Speed, Deliberation, and Persistence

Because the changes that transforming institutions sought were deep, pervasive, and cultural, institutional leaders had to be persistent and had to strike a balance between patience and action. Successful leaders knew that change would not occur quickly. They refrained from forcing issues when they thought that such insistence would result in hastily conceived decisions, would alienate those whose cooperation was needed, or would result in a perception that leaders were more concerned with doing "something" rather than doing the right thing. Leaders had to be patient and invest the time and effort to establish a firm groundwork; however, exercising restraint did not mean that leaders succumbed to inaction. They intentionally regulated the intensity of the effort. They took advantage of both positive and negative opportunities, such as budget cuts or new funding opportunities, to push for change.

Persistence is key to transformational change. Through the challenges, turmoil, complexities, excitement, accomplishments, and distractions, leaders of transforming institutions remained committed and focused attention on their change agendas. They were consistent in their principles and goals and clear about the potential benefit to the institution; but their persistence also was tempered by flexibility. They were willing to consider taking different paths to achieve shared objectives. They acted on worthwhile suggestions and chose their battles wisely. Their direction was steadfast without being rigid.

Leaders helped their boards understand that major change takes time. Trustees, especially those from the corporate sector, often perceive academic change as slow when compared to the rate of change in business. While the deliberateness of academic processes does slow the rate of change, the inclusion of differing voices, widespread discussion, and intense scrutiny and debate improve the outcome and enhance ownership in the long run. Thus, the challenge for change leaders is to balance sufficient pressure to accelerate change with a patient, long-term perspective.

Expecting the Unexpected

Because change is not a linear or predictable process even with some initial success, coping with surprises is an essential skill for change leaders. An editorial in the student newspaper, a casual comment by a department chair or a senior administrator, a new mandate from the board, or the departure of a key campus leader can create a seemingly irrational chain of events, generating new challenges to which leaders must respond.

Among the more difficult surprises are unresolved conflicts that suddenly resurface. Individual faculty members, who had long ago agreed to the general goals and principles of the change, and even the early actions, may rise in opposition; groups that previously seemed to agree may suddenly clash. These new conflicts may surprise change leaders if they assume that the major work of forging shared goals is behind them. Successful change leaders did not allow these new conflicts to knock them off balance; they found ways to resolve conflicts (or at least to hear all parties) and to keep moving.

Helping People Think Differently

As much as transformational change is about *doing* things differently, it is also about *thinking* differently, both institutionally and individually. Large-scale change forces people to ask what the changes mean for them, their activities, and their assumptions.

We observed two ways that transforming institutions demonstrated new institutional thinking. First, in some instances, colleges and universities attached new meanings to familiar language and concepts. For example, one institution recognized that it had redefined what it means to be a "good teacher" in its new technology-rich environment. No longer did a good teacher simply mean someone with well-organized lecture notes ready to present information; the definition extended to someone who knew how to use available technology to help students actively engage in learning.

In other instances, the institutions developed new language and ideas to describe and understand the changed institution. For example, one institution added the words "customer" and "client" to its collective vocabulary. They decided that the institution's customers were the companies that hired their graduates, the local community where their graduates lived, and the state legislature. They thought that their students were more accurately described as "clients." This new language helped stress the ways they served different institutional stakeholders and helped them to differentiate the various ways that they were responsible for learning and to whom.

Leaders were intentional about providing opportunities to foster new thinking. They created the time and space for people to come together to question the status quo, to explore the ways it had become insufficient, to question assumptions, to tell stories, and to posit new ideas. The following strategies helped people create new mental models and redefine important concepts:

Campus Conversations

Ongoing and widespread conversations to clarify and create new meaning rather than to advance or argue positions were major factors in helping individuals and institutions think differently about themselves. Such conversations allowed many people to learn about problems and challenges from an institutional perspective, rather than from a departmental or unit view, creating a deeper understanding and greater investment in the entire institution. These opportunities allowed faculty and staff, and frequently students and trustees, to wrestle collectively with ideas, to try new priorities and ways of thinking, and to align key concepts with new realities. Then they could explore the ways in which they personally could adjust to the emerging future. Through these conversations, institutions also developed new common language and a consensus on key ideas.

Engagement with Outsiders and New Ideas

Institutions that were successful in creating new ways of thinking benefited from the ideas, comments, suggestions, and challenges from interested outsiders who challenged key institutional beliefs and assumptions. In many instances, these outsiders were able to ask challenging questions that would have been difficult for campus leaders to raise. Some institutions invited outside speakers to attend campus retreats or sponsored a lecture series with a list of speakers who raised questions and brought to the table new ideas related to the change agenda. For example, one institution working on diversity and social engagement created a lecture series of national and international speakers including church and civic leaders, social activists, writers, and government officials from the United States and abroad who addressed ideas of social responsibility and the civic role of higher education. Some campuses sent groups of faculty and administrators to regional and national conferences. Other campuses encouraged (and

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funded) campus teams to visit other institutions that were working on similar issues. On some campuses, change leaders widely distributed key readings and developed ways to discuss those readings at retreats, during regularly scheduled meetings, or through reading groups specifically organized as professional seminars. In all cases, leaders did not simply distribute readings or disseminate ideas; they created ways to actively engage the campus in discussions of those ideas.

Seminal Documents

Change leaders organized processes to develop a guiding document (or set of documents) that would shape the direction of the change agenda and connect it to important institutional values. Although the document(s) created often made important contributions, the process of developing, drafting, circulating, discussing, rewriting, presenting, and polishing the document helped create new thinking. The process of writing down important ideas got people to talk about their assumptions, engaged them continuously and deeply, and tapped into their abilities and training as scholars. These campus compacts, strategic statements, and position and discussion papers later shaped institutional direction and, in some cases, informed strategic plans. For example, one institution developed an iterative process to create a statement of its "core competencies" for students. To create this document, change leaders sponsored a set of campus-wide discussions that led to a draft statement; this statement was, in turn, discussed at subsequent faculty retreats, in cabinet meetings, at board meetings, and at campus-wide forums that resulted in modifications to the document. The leaders also asked the campus for additional written comments. This entire process involved approximately 300 people and took 18 months.

Cross-departmental Teams

Many of the institutions created cross-departmental work teams that helped generate new ideas and new approaches. These work teams brought together faculty and staff across the institution who had different perspectives and different assumptions. The tasks they were charged with and their interactions and collective explorations led to discussions about beliefs, assumptions, and ideas. The mixture of people holding diverse positions and working in different units enriched the discussion by helping to encourage the exchange of ideas.

Public Presentations

The institutions that were successful in generating new thinking offered numerous opportunities for people to give public presentations of their ideas. First, the task of organizing public presentations demands that people think explicitly about their ideas and assumptions. Second, they have opportunities to hear and respond to questions from listeners. Over time, their thinking became more clear and their ideas more concrete.

Attention to Process

A fourth factor shaping the course of change was attention to process. Colleges and universities display paradoxical attitudes toward the change process. On the one hand, most of the energy for and conversation about the change center on the substance, or the *what* of change; the process, or the *how*, often is an afterthought. Yet fierce battles are fought over process issues–who is consulted and how much, how information is or is not shared, and how decisions get made. Change initiatives are as likely to be derailed over disagreements about process as they are about substance. Thus, a well-thought-out and inclusive process is an essential component of successful and enduring change. The leaders of the transforming institutions focused their energy not only on *what* they wanted to accomplish but

also on *how* they were going about the process of change. The following list is not exhaustive; it attempts to go beyond the conventional wisdom such as "leaders created buy-in" or "leaders communicated widely." The reader may judge these insights into successful strategy to sound familiar. Yet the experience of campus change leaders demonstrates that they are easier to identify than to implement consistently.

Right Topic–Right Time

Institutions that progressed had leaders who identified an extremely important set of issues to tackle at the right time in the institution's life. The change agenda was meaningful to a variety of campus stakeholders; it made sense to those who would be needed in leadership roles and to people whose lives would be affected directly. Few change initiatives automatically make sense to everyone. Different groups–as determined by position (such as central administrators, deans, chairs, trustees, and faculty), by discipline, or by some other characteristic (such as recent and past faculty hires)–respond differently to the same information, messages, and ideas. These different key groups, which varied from campus to campus, attended to different stimuli, responded to different motivations, and had different interpretations of what was important and why. The burning issues for one group were not always the same as another group. Thus, to gain the commitment and involvement of different individuals, campus leaders developed a variety of approaches to communicate a common message and set of objectives to different key stakeholders in ways meaningful to each group.

Introducing the change agenda at the right moment was also important. For some institutions, that meant not introducing new challenges immediately on the heels of resolving a difficult set of issues or soon after a divisive decision. For others, a new challenge provided a campus rallying point that infused new energy and enthusiasm after getting through a difficult period. In other instances, leaders built on the positive energy and confidence of a job well done. In each case, the "right" time meant something different depending on the institution's historic trajectory.

The timing also had to be right in the ebb and flow of academic life. Leaders of institutions that made progress did not introduce new, complex issues at peak times in the semester, such as when faculty were busy starting their classes, and they did not make decisions over the summer that would affect faculty. Rather, change leaders at these institutions attended to the rhythms of daily campus life, choosing to introduce ideas and start work when they could capture the most attention and time. They also worked to moderate the pace of change. Institutional leaders learned that too much change at once could easily overwhelm the campus.

Framing a Positive Change Agenda

Transforming institutions had leaders who framed the change agenda in positive ways. These institutions clearly stated the compelling reasons for undertaking the journey of change, focusing on improvement and not blaming any particular group. These leaders realized that key constituents must recognize the necessity for action before they willingly participate. Changing behaviors or setting new priorities by command is different from agreeing to change because it is personally important. Successful leaders connected the need for change with important institutional and individual values–improving student learning, increasing excellence, and becoming more socially responsible. They positioned the change agenda as essential to a *better* future, not simply a different future.

Change leaders used a variety of approaches to make a compelling case that supported their well-chosen language. Some successful campuses used a data-driven approach, collecting hard evidence and conducting studies to assess the extent of the challenges. Other institutions took a different

Successful leaders connected the need for change with important institutional and individual values—improving student learning, increasing excellence, and becoming more socially responsible.

approach, using qualitative factors–stories, beliefs, anecdotes, assumptions, and aspirations–to make the case for change. The provost at one campus identified what he called the "common irritants" across campus and used those to frame the change agenda.

Constructively framed change agendas also did not assign blame, so that people did not feel threatened or indicted for their current or past behaviors, performance, or competence. Because faculty and administrators make substantial commitments to their institutions, disciplines, and professions, agendas that suggested failures on their parts created resistance, disinterest, and defensiveness. Leaders of transforming institutions framed the change agendas about better futures without making people feel attacked or diminished. For example, two institutions–both attempting to use technology to enhance teaching and learning–articulated their agendas differently. Leaders at one institution that was struggling framed the agenda around persuading faculty to teach differently in order to benefit from information technology and the Internet. The second institution, which made more progress, framed its agenda around ways to improve student learning using the high-tech tools available.

Because faculty and administrators make substantial commitments to their institutions, disciplines, and professions, agendas that suggested failures on their parts created resistance, disinterest, and defensiveness.

Framing the change agenda constructively also involved explicit dissemination strategies, or what one faculty leader called "an internal public relations campaign." Regular presentations of data, highly visible ad-hoc task forces, widely disseminated reports, periodic columns in campus newspapers, and targeted newsletters helped convey why change was important. Leaders also engaged in informal conversations, used unstructured time, and devoted the beginnings and ends of meetings to bring others into the discussion about the change needed to improve the institution.

Investments to Support the Change

Armed with the understanding that changes required new skills, ideas, concepts, and languages, leaders invested in activities that helped people gain these new skills and the confidence required to apply them. Among the activities and investments were on-campus workshops covering issues central to the change agenda, attendance at national and regional conferences, the hiring of technical support personnel (particularly computer and instructional designers), and enhanced faculty development and teaching excellence centers. Leaders created units to provide new services, such as community-university relations and centers for teaching excellence. They also created new administrative positions that contained key elements of the change agenda in their portfolios. These new positions and offices not only showed that someone was responsible for the issues surrounding the change but also sent the message that these issues are important enough to receive staff, budgets, and office space.

Institutions that made progress found new sources of revenue from gifts, state funds, and endowments. Two institutions were able to secure one-time large investments from the state to purchase computers and upgrade facilities that would support their changes in teaching and learning. In addition to providing the resources to pay for new initiatives, additional funds also created a sense of legitimacy for the changes, particularly when the monies came from gifts and grants. Faculty and staff saw these funds as recognition of their good work. For example, one institution was able to secure Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) and National Science Foundation (NSF) funding to undertake significant curricular changes. Another institution secured grants from different private foundations, each of which addressed a discrete component of the institution's transformation agenda. One grant supported faculty development. Another allowed the institution to invest in its infrastructure and upgrade classroom buildings. A third grant provided resources to develop a new cohort of courses, using innovative pedagogy.

Inviting Participation

Recognizing that change would not occur simply by the effort of a few dedicated champions, leaders at transforming institutions identified and tapped passionate advocates across campus. Department chairs, senior faculty, and mid-level administrators played an essential role in making change and making it last. Because of the depth and pervasiveness of transformational change, advocates in different units also played important roles in embedding the change agenda deep in the fabric of institution. Campus leaders recognized the need to identify advocates in key areas of the institution: Where might pockets of future resistance lie? In which units or departments is commitment essential? Leaders then gave the advocates the needed support and assurance to bring about changes in their areas.

The leaders also made sure to identify advocates who had earned the respect of different campus groups and who had developed the ability to capture the groups' attention. Identifying people with enthusiasm, but little influence, increased the number of supporters but did little to advance change.

The leaders at transforming institutions offered a range of ways people could participate in the change process. Institutional transformation requires many talented hands, and although passionate leaders are important, they alone cannot effect transformation. Because the opportunities for participation varied, leaders capitalized on the skills and interests that people could bring to specific projects and to different leadership roles. Such varied opportunities for involvement kept up the energy level for change, especially when new strengths were needed or as current leaders got tired or distracted. Varied opportunities also allowed faculty and staff to choose the timing of their involvement and the amount of time they could commit. Perhaps more importantly, people could change the ways in which they participated over time. They could be highly involved at the beginning, take a sabbatical, refocus their efforts, and rejoin in a different capacity, if they so desired.

Effective Decision Making

Successful change requires that leaders pay special attention to the forms and functions of institutional governance, such as faculty senates and their committees, joint faculty-administrative planning groups, and the board and its committees. Those institutions that made progress toward transformation developed specific processes to use campus decision-making bodies in ways consistent with expectations, beliefs, and norms. By adhering to the expected roles for campus governance, institutional leaders could use governance as a facilitator of change, rather than seeing it as an impediment. At the same time that these institutions honored the traditional means of decision making, they still were not afraid to create new, ad-hoc governing bodies that met institutionally defined thresholds for legitimacy; these groups could work faster and assemble the necessary leaders better than standing governance committees. They balanced formal governance and its structures and procedures with new, innovative, responsive task forces of faculty and administrators and, frequently, students and trustees.

A Sense of Urgency and the Use of Deadlines

Campus leaders used publicly declared deadlines to keep the change process moving. Sometimes external groups determined these deadlines, which included, for example, due dates for funding proposals. At other times, internal events such as board meetings, budget cycles, or the printing of the course catalogue drove important deadlines. By making deadlines well known and by publicizing the potential risks of missing them, leaders kept the change process on track. At the same time, they did not create or enforce unreasonable deadlines for quick decisions, nor did they set unrealistic timelines that would lead to premature decisions–decisions that institutional governance might later overturn or have to revisit.

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How Do Institutional Differences Affect the Change Process?

The ACE Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation and KFHET revealed many similarities among the experiences of the diverse institutions seeking to make change, but they also uncovered differences in the ways in which institutions approached change. The two most important variables were institutional size and institutional culture.

Institutional Size

Institutional size exerted a particularly strong influence on the process. Small institutions—particularly liberal arts colleges and some comprehensive institutions—faced different challenges from those of the large, differentiated universities and community colleges with multiple locations, several layers of administration, and highly specialized offices. Convening a meeting of the entire faculty of a liberal arts college in a single room for a meeting is not an overly difficult task; however, doing the same thing at a large research university or multicampus community college might require the use of a basketball arena. Institutional size also affected communications, institutional memory, sense of community, and faculty involvement.

Attention and Communication

Both large and small institutions had to attend carefully to the related issues of sharing information and capturing the attention necessary to move a change initiative. Leaders of large institutions had to deal with the challenges of scale and diffusion to capture the attention of the various campus stakeholders. Simply informing a large group of people of the issues at hand was a challenge, requiring significant time and energy. At such institutions, change leaders began with the assumption that information travels slowly, indirectly, unevenly, and somewhat mysteriously. Leaders could not assume that the same messages, or even coherent messages, were heard by faculty spread across a campus in buildings literally one mile apart. Leaders also had to cope with various distractions that could have impeded the institution from focusing on its change agenda. At large research universities, attending to institutional issues is rarely a faculty member's priority. Attuned to their disciplines and related departmental agendas, they are a particularly difficult audience to engage.

In smaller institutions, the situation was quite different because information and its more seductive cousins, rumor and speculation, seemed to travel faster than thought itself. While leaders at large institutions worked to ensure that information flowed and was heard, leaders at smaller institutions had to moderate the pace of information. Leaks and misinformation could quickly spread across the institution, creating anxiety and sometimes unwarranted anger. Rather than the problem of inadequate attention, change leaders at many small institutions sought safe places to conduct difficult conversations, to explore ideas, and to

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[A] fragmented institutional memory meant that people were unaware of previous efforts or of important foundations already established. Change teams did difficult work, only to realize when sharing their efforts with others that they had, in fact, re-created the wheel.

question espoused values so that faculty and staff did not interpret rumor and speculation as fact. Even the knowledge that a group of certain individuals was meeting could trigger unreasoned and unproductive responses.

Institutional Memory

Another difference between large and small institutions was institutional memory. The intensity and closeness of small colleges made it likely that history, transmuted into stories and myths, was kept alive through telling and retelling over time. People readily remembered past attempts at change and reminded change leaders of that history. Grudges and hurt feelings often accompanied tales of lost battles and unfulfilled hopes for failed initiatives. Newcomers to the campus learned the stories early in their careers. Bringing about major change, in many instances at small colleges, was as much about moving beyond the past as it was about forging new futures.

At large universities and community colleges, institutional memory was not as widely shared, and interpretations of the past varied tremendously. Some groups remembered one version while others recalled different stories. In such institutions, where there were more faculty and staff, the constant infusion of new people diminished collective memory. In some cases, institutional memory was less compelling than college or departmental history. This dispersed memory challenged change leaders, who could not work with a single shared memory but had to respond to the many versions. They attended to one set of historic disappointments only to discover that another key group remembered something different that change leaders also needed to address before progressing. In some instances, a fragmented institutional memory meant that people were unaware of previous efforts or of important foundations already established. Change teams did difficult work, only to realize when sharing their efforts with others that they had, in fact, re-created the wheel. Large institutions, therefore, had to find ways to avoid redundancy and to capture and build upon previous successful change efforts.

Opportunities for Involvement and Active Contributors

At institutions with a small number of faculty members, the expectation to be involved in college-wide decisions is high. The institution expects them to participate in at least one faculty governance committee, and for those who find the work rewarding, they can serve on multiple committees. Thus, at small colleges faculty members share a wider responsibility for the business of the college and participate in decisions that may not be the responsibility of professors at larger institutions. When faculty expect to play integral roles in key institutional processes, the successful change initiative operates in ways consistent with the institutional norm.

However, a paradox exists at small institutions. Though faculty members have high expectations for involvement, small institutions have a limited number of people available to contribute. A modest size of the faculty and administration limits the range of additional tasks the college can handle. At some institutions, there were simply not enough people to share the work of effecting major change while carrying on the daily business of the institution. The number of active contributors usually is limited to those who are interested in institutional issues (as opposed to their own teaching and research or departmental matters) or those with the skills and temperament for working on campus issues. Sabbaticals or departures by only a few key faculty members sometimes created a leadership void difficult to fill.

At large institutions, capacity is not as central an issue. However, faculty expectations for involvement focus on the local level–college, departmental, or research group– and frequently the compelling issues at that level may differ from those of the institution or of other campuses in a system. Individuals with

this expectation may believe they do not have the expertise to solve institution-wide problems or they may have little interest in addressing them. The challenge for change leaders at large institutions is to provide key stakeholders with adequate information that enables them to contribute constructively and motivates them to participate in institutional issues beyond their departments or campuses.

Institutional Culture

We began this project with the assumption that each institution would create its own journey of change, shaped by its size and mission, its patterns of decision making, and its history and norms—that is, the unique institutional culture would create its own process. And indeed, the change processes we observed at each institution were clearly influenced by deeply embedded patterns of behavior, expectations, values, and beliefs about how that institution functions. For example, strong faculty authority, leadership, and decision making characterized some institutions while others were more responsive to administrative centralization and direction. Because institutional culture dictated collective ways of perceiving, acting, and believing, successful change strategies could not be simply imported; change leaders had to craft strategies to fit their cultures. As institutions worked to modify their cultures, the most progress was made by those working within their cultures to effect the broad and deep changes.

Customizing strategies to specific cultures meant that even though transforming institutions drew upon a similar repertoire of change strategies, they carried out these strategies differently, in ways that followed unique cultural beliefs and expectations. For example, two institutions that focused on transforming teaching and learning had very different cultures. One institution, a public research-intensive institution, was grounded in a culture of collaboration. Its roots as a teacher's college created a culture that honored learning, not only for its students but also for faculty and staff. Because the administration had been in place for well over a decade and because the institution's faculty had come to the university and stayed, there was wide agreement about the culture. For many, it was the only place they had worked professionally. The campus was deeply collaborative and shared information widely, which helped create a strong feeling of trust: Much of the institution's business occurred in the hallways and the cafeteria. Faculty members trusted each other, administrators trusted faculty to deliver a strong curriculum and solid academic programs, and faculty trusted administrators to make wise decisions in the institution's best interests and to include faculty in difficult dialogues about the institution's future. Most key academic decisions were made locally in academic units, with the central administration facilitating, but not dictating, campus activities.

The culture of a second institution, a community college, stands in contrast. Characterized by strong senior administrators at a central office of a multicampus system, the culture of this institution was highly managerial, very goal conscious, and organized by a sophisticated planning system. Assessment was an important issue, and results from institutional research directly shaped decisions. Administrators paid close attention to local trends and tapped into the needs of the business community. Faculty members were deeply committed to student learning, and all major decisions included conversations about the ways in which potential outcomes would or would not benefit student learning.

Both institutions were working on similar change initiatives, and both used similar strategies to bring about the desired changes; however, the approaches to some of these strategies differed because of campus culture. For instance, these two institutions invited participation and invested in the change

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process in ways that were different from each other but that reflected their own cultures. At the community college, central administrators formally invited all faculty and staff to participate in a set of ongoing campus-wide conversations. From these conversations, campus leaders identified influential individuals (faculty and staff) who participated frequently in the conversations and challenged their peers to think broadly and test assumptions. Campus leaders asked the most influential roundtable participants to lead one of eight coordinated working groups. At the research-intensive university, because campus leaders became extremely familiar with the institution and its informal leaders, they invited people they already knew to serve on a single campus-wide committee. In this case, there was no need for an institution-wide process to "uncover" campus leaders.

The community college offered a centrally coordinated set of professional development activities to support the change efforts in ways different from the research-intensive university. It developed a long list of leadership and professional development opportunities. During the first year, it offered more than 120 activities, most of which were open to the entire faculty and staff. At the research-intensive university, campus leaders decentralized professional development as each college received resources to design and implement its own development activities. Each college was given the flexibility to design activities meaningful to its faculty. Institutional change agents knew that institution-wide workshops and symposia would generate little interest; campus leaders recognized that allowing faculty and college administrators to create their own development opportunities at a local level would generate higher participation.

Conclusion

Our experience in writing five essays in the *On Change* series has revealed the challenges of distilling the experiences of many different institutions without overgeneralizing or appearing simplistic. Mindful of the rich diversity of institutional sagas and of the ever-changing questions of who leads and in what kind of environment, we offer no "golden rules" for change leaders. Rather, our efforts have focused on seeing patterns across institutions and in their leaders, and in finding descriptors that capture these patterns.

Some of the observations in this essay are not new or startling; yet, we often have asked ourselves, if change seems so simple, why is it so hard? One answer that we keep rediscovering is that change is a very human process, requiring people who define themselves as the experts (be they faculty or administrators) to become learners. In so doing, they become newly vulnerable, confronting the fear that accompanies loss of control and the pain of being uncertain of finding oneself in the new order. Change leaders who fail to grasp the profound human needs of knowing, belonging, and understanding what is happening to people risk taking a mechanistic view of apparently simple advice, such as "communicate widely." We repeatedly realized the central role of trust in the change process, and the ways in which leaders created (or failed to create) reservoirs of goodwill through the values and principles they *lived* rather than merely pronounced. Thus, we constantly saw the importance of openness, of modeling behaviors where principles were aligned with actions, and where the vision of a common good placed self-interest into a larger perspective. There is nothing mechanical about leading change in ways that honor this complexity and humanness. Although we often refer to this mix as the "process," the term lacks the depth and vibrancy of the realities that it describes.

Another reason that change seems so hard is the difficulty of being both a participant and observer. Leaders at transforming institutions saw their change efforts as a work in progress and were more likely to focus on the road ahead than the distance already covered. Change often looks like a failure from the middle. The work not yet accomplished often is more visible than the changes made; the voices of the naysayers seem louder than those of the change promoters. Taking stock is helpful not only because it provides useful feedback for mid-course corrections, but because it also affirms accomplishment and nourishes future work.

Finally, because many of the ideas presented here about how to lead change seem simple and straightforward, campus change leaders can easily slip into thinking that they know how to lead change. This sense of comfort creates false confidence, leading people to give too little attention to their institution's culturally defined change process and to the experiences of the people involved.

But these difficulties should not suggest that advancing change is such painful work that should be reserved only for the most obdurate or masochistic of leaders. The experiences of the two projects that inform this essay revealed the excitement that new directions can generate, the rediscovery of institutional pride, and the wellspring of untapped individual potential. In many institutions, the visible

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and measurable effects of change on student growth and learning affirmed that their efforts successfully improved the heart of the enterprise.

Clearly the turbulent environment of technology, globalization, and competition–as well as the larger social needs that higher education must address–will leave no institution unchanged in the years to come. But being intentional about effecting change–that is, riding the waves rather than ducking them and hoping for the best–will likely be the most important factor in deciding which institutions thrive and which ones wither. The challenge to higher education leaders is clear.

Appendix A

ACE Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation Institutions and Their Change Initiatives

Ball State University (IN)
Redefining Relationships with the Larger Community

Bowie State University (MD)
Shared Governance, Outcomes Assessment, and Merit-Based Performance Pay

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
Developing and Implementing an Integrated Strategy for Enhancing Learning and Teaching with Technology

Centenary College of Louisiana
Strengthening the Academic Community without Sacrificing Academic Freedom

The City College of the City University of New York
Maximizing Student Success

College of DuPage (IL)
A Transformative Planning Process

El Paso Community College District (TX)
The Pathway to the Future/El Paso Al Futuro

Kent State University (OH)
Moving the Strategic Plan Forward: Cross-Unit Planning and Implementing

Knox College (IL)
Faculty Life in a Changing Environment: Family, Profession, Students and Institutional Values

Maricopa County Community College District (AZ)
Learning@Maricopa.edu

Michigan State University
Enhancing the Intensity of the Academic Environment

Mills College (CA)
Re-examine and Revitalize the Interrelationship Between Undergraduate Women's Education and Specialized Graduate Programs for Women and Men

Northeastern University (MA)
Call to Action on Cooperative Education

Olivet College (MI)
Creating a Culture of Individual and Social Responsibility

Portland State University (OR)
Developing Faculty for the Urban University of the 21st Century

Seton Hall University (NJ)
Transforming the Learning Environment

State University of New York College at Geneseo
Review, Debate, and Revision of General Education Requirements

Stephen F. Austin University (TX)
Revitalizing Faculty, Administration and Staff

University of Arizona
Building Academic Community: Department Heads as Catalysts

University of Hartford (CT)*
Planning and Managing Technology

University of Massachusetts, Boston
Assessing Student Outcomes

University of Minnesota
Improving the Collegiate Experience for First-Year Students

University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras
Reconceptualizing the Baccalaureate Degree

University of Wisconsin–La Crosse*
Building Community: An Institutional Approach to Academic Excellence

Valencia Community College (FL)
Becoming a Learning-Centered College: Improving Learning by Collaborating to Transform Core College Processes

Wellesley College (MA)*
Improving the Intellectual Life of the College

** Participated in years 1–3.*

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Appendix B

Kellogg Forum on Higher Education Transformation

In 1995, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation launched the Kellogg Network on Institutional Transformation (KNIT), an initiative "to learn and work with institutions, helping them to transform themselves to be more flexible, accountable, collaborative, and responsive to students, faculty, the communities, and the regions they serve." This initiative identified, encouraged, and supported five institutions as distinctive, emerging models of institutional change. Through the network, the foundation aimed to use strategic institutional change models to build capacity for change across sectors of higher education.

In early 1997, foundation leaders decided to seek partners that could assist them in researching and understanding the change process and in working with the designated KNIT institutions. To this end, the foundation established the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education Transformation (KFHET)in May 1998 with the purpose of bringing together scholars and practitioners in higher education to translate the experiences of individual campuses into learning that could be adapted and replicated.

Participants in the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education Transformation are:

Alverno College (WI)

American Council on Education

The Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan

The Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California-Los Angeles

Minnesota State College and University System

The New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts, Boston

Olivet College (MI)

Portland State University (OR)

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation

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